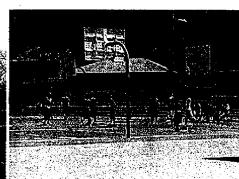
CITY OF READING

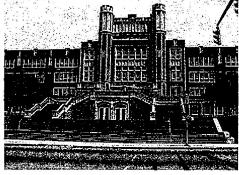
10-YEAR PARK, RECREATION.
AND OPEN SPACE PLAN
MAY 2002

















PREPARED BY THE TEAM OF:

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CITY OF READING 10-YEAR PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN MAY 2002

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

THIS PLAN AND THE IMPORTANCE OF RECREATION AND PARKS

This Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan presents ways to enhance the quality of life for those who live and work in the City of Reading. It serves as a guide for the improvement of the City's public park areas, recreation facilities, and programs.

This Plan indicates how to develop, rehabilitate and improve active recreational facilities (such as tennis courts, skateboard parks, basketball courts and athletic fields) and more passive areas (such as bicycle trails and picnic areas) to serve the needs of the present and future residents. Additional and expanded recreation programs are also recommended within this Plan.

Recommendations have been provided within this Plan to consider adequate maintenance, security, and safety measures within the City's parks and to better inform the community about and involve them in the recreation opportunities that are available to them.

The City's Parks and Recreation Teams are the two major providers of parks and recreation services in Reading. The efforts of these agencies greatly enrich the lives of many people. While these two organizations have important roles to play in carrying out this Plan, so do others. Cooperation will be essential among residents, community groups and organizations, the Reading School District, County of Berks, and many other individuals and agencies for the recommendations, so this Plan can be successfully implemented.

Municipal recreation and park services offer significant benefits and value to Reading's citizens and the community as a whole. Through recreation and parks, opportunities are provided for neighbors to meet each other, to build a stronger sense of community, and to strengthen families. Citizens enjoy the outdoors, youth are provided with alternatives, and older adults stay active. Recreation and parks do more to improve the quality of life for City residents than any other municipal service. This Plan presents ways to strengthen and enhance the opportunities for citizens to enjoy the City's park areas and recreation facilities and participate in quality recreation programs.

The City of Reading was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Community Development Block Grant Program to complete a Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan. This Plan will provide guidance for future recreation planning efforts, park development, programs and infrastructure improvements within the City of Reading for the next 10 years.

CREATING THE PLAN

This Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan was prepared to be a continued effort by implementing the goals, objectives and policies as contained within the City of Reading Comprehensive Plan, as completed in 2000. The Plan has been undertaken in four phases:

Phase 1: An Overview of the City of Reading

Demographic and economic profile and information concerning government structure within the City of Reading are included within this section.

Phase 2: Community Involvement

Three techniques have been used to involve and get input from the citizens of the City of Reading:

Written Surveys: A 12-question survey was distributed to and completed by 5,270 middle and high school students in the Reading School District. Written surveys were also distributed to 74 groups and organizations providing services in the City of Reading. Results of each survey were tabulated and analyzed.

<u>Public Meetings:</u> Citizens attended four neighborhood workshop meetings held at selected schools throughout the City of Reading. These meetings addressed local interests and concerns about parks and recreation to seek ideas and input.

<u>Interviews</u>: Interviews were held with City parks and recreation staff to gain additional information and insight about the present system.

Phase 3: Inventory, Analysis, and Issues

Five aspects of the system in place to deliver parks and recreation services within the City of Reading have been evaluated:

- Staffing and Financing
- Park Areas and Recreation Facilities
- Recreation Programs
- Maintenance, Safety, and Security
- Communications and Public Involvement

The parks and recreation inventory information has been summarized into key issues, to clearly show the opportunities and challenges facing the City of Reading in the future and to determine existing and future park, recreation, and open space needs.

Phase 4: Action Plan and Implementation Strategies

Utilizing the key issues facing the City's recreation and park system, goals and policies have been developed to provide a framework for making Plan recommendations.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Reading 10-Year Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan (May 2002) was prepared with the assistance of many people, groups and organizations. In February of 2001, the City of Reading selected the professional consulting team of Hawk Valley Associates, ARRO Consulting, ELA Group, and Recreation and Parks Solutions, to prepare this Plan. With the assistance of the Public Works Department and Community Development Department, the City of Reading has successfully planned today for the recreation and open space needs of tomorrow. This Plan will provide guidance for future recreation planning efforts, park development, programs and infrastructure improvements within the City of Reading for the next 10 years.

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The City of Reading 10-Year Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan (May 2002) was adopted by City Council on May 13, 2002. The project was funded by a \$50,000 grant from the Community Development Block Grant Program.

Based upon community input and the findings of the inventory and analysis of existing conditions, recommendations and a 10-year action plan have been formulated including ways to finance and implement the necessary improvements and plan recommendations have been outlined. The professional park and recreation staff and revisions were made to the Plan before it was formally recommended to the Reading City Council for adoption.

PURPOSES OF THIS PLAN

This Plan serves the following 10 purposes:

- 1. Develop a detailed inventory of the City's parks, playgrounds, and open space areas and facilities.
- 2. Identify service areas for each of the City's parks and playgrounds based on the proximity of sites to neighborhoods.
- Identify improvements of existing park areas and recreation facilities and potential locations for acquisition of additional parkland, to meet use and accessibility standards and address the current and future needs of neighborhoods.
- 4. Present a 10-year plan and budget to complete the identified improvements and acquisition of parkland, addressing the highest priority items first and distributing the expense evenly over the 10-year period.
- 5. Provide recommendations for development and expansion of recreation programs.
- 6. Evaluate the staffing and the allocations of funds for the park operation and maintenance and recreation program functions of City government, and provide direction to most cost effectively and efficiently provide recreation and park services for the City of Reading.
- 7. Provide potential trail and greenway opportunities for significant resources such as the Schuylkill River and to link park areas and recreation facilities to neighborhoods.
- 8. Provide guidance on methods to allow the public to enjoy greenways, park areas, and recreation facilities through improved maintenance of sites.
- 9. Identify revenue sources such as grants and user fees to fund recreation programs, provide adequate staffing, and finance the implementation of the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan recommendations.
- Identify partnership opportunities for the City to improve parks and recreation services for citizens.

SECTION 2: AN OVERVIEW OF THE CITY OF READING

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CITY OF READING

Relatively little is known of the Native American settlements that were located on land now occupied by the City of Reading. As the Lenni Lenape tribe occupied this part of the country, the settlements were likely seasonal rather than permanent, a pattern that is consistent with the semi-nomadic lifestyle of these people. All of what is now the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was granted to William Penn by King Charles II of England as repayment of a debt owed to Penn's father. Unusual for his time, Penn believed that the real "owners" of his new territory were the original inhabitants. Upon his arrival in the New World, he proceeded to bargain with the native peoples for the right to the property granted him by the Crown. Consequently, the early history of Pennsylvania is notably free from the battles with natives that characterize the European settlement of most of the United States.

The European settlement of Reading did not begin until the 1730's, when it was first divided into six tracts of land. These parcels later became part of a plan for the "Towne of Reading" proposed in 1743 by William Penn's sons Richard and Thomas. The Penn brothers named the town after Reading in Berkshire, England, the ancestral "shrine" of the Penn family. Officially laid out in 1748, Reading's original plan featured 520 lots and 204 out lots in a grid pattern as well as two principal streets.

Penn Street, named for William Penn, was laid out in an east-to-west orientation perpendicular to the Schuylkill River, and incorporated part of the Tulpehocken Road that connected Philadelphia and Harrisburg. What are now the 400 and 500 blocks of Penn Street were historically called Market Street, since those blocks were the location of farmers' markets until 1871. Conrad Weiser, a prominent figure in the County's early history, operated the City's first general store on a lot purchased in 1749 along Penn Street. Callowhill Street, currently known as Fifth Street, was named after Hannah Callowhill, William Penn's second wife. It is laid out in a north-south direction, intersecting Penn Street at right angles. Most streets in the new "Towne" were originally given the names of royal titles and those of Richard and Thomas Penn, receiving their present names in 1833.

When the County of Berks was created in 1752, Reading became the County seat. The original Courthouse was erected in 1762 in what is now Penn Square. Reading grew, becoming an incorporated borough in 1783, a city in 1847, and a Third Class City, its current status in 1874. Transportation and its effects were largely responsible for Reading's early growth. Ferries were used to cross the Schuylkill River until the first Penn Street Bridge was built in 1810, followed by a bridge at Bingaman Street in 1831. The first major roads to connect Reading with other cities were turnpikes. The Centre Turnpike Company, incorporated in 1805, built a road to the north, the Perkiomen and Reading Turnpike (1810) led southeast, and the Berks and Dauphin Turnpike (1817) headed west. Stagecoaches provided inner-city transportation along these and other routes between 1786 and 1838. By the late 1820's, two canals served Reading, establishing the City as a halfway point in the system of canals linking the Susquehanna River with the Delaware River. The Schuylkill Navigation Canal, connecting Reading and Philadelphia, was completed in 1824; the Union Canal was in operation by 1828. The relative ease of movement afforded by these early "highways" resulted in a period of industrial growth during the first half of the 19th Century. The City's early industry consisted of smaller enterprises in trades, crafts, and light manufacturing. Local factories produced beer, cigars, shoes and boots. Reading was also a thriving center for hat making: in 1806, there were 40 hat factories in the City.

Reading developed rapidly between 1825 and 1850. The Industrial Revolution of the 1830's brought to this country the invention of steam-powered machinery and a surge of advances in heavy industry and transportation. The new railroads were so successful that the stagecoaches and the new canal system were unable to compete and were eventually abandoned. The largest local railroad was the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad. Incorporated in 1833, the Philadelphia and Reading constructed the first line from Reading to Pottstown in 1837. This line was extended to Philadelphia in 1839. The company originally built the line to ship coal from Pennsylvania's anthracite region to the markets and ports of the eastern seaboard: there was no passenger service until the 1840's. The Philadelphia and Reading eventually became one of the largest railroad industries in the nation, and was briefly the largest industrial corporation in the world just prior to the Civil War. It was an industry unto itself, constructing its own railroad shops where the first coal-burning engine was designed and built. Other early industries included the Reading Iron and Nail Works and the Carpenter Steel Mills, along with hosiery and knitting mills, hardware production, foundries, machine works and flour mills. Other factories produced a variety of goods including bricks, furniture, combs and brushes, and pianos. The Civil War brought greater demands for goods, causing factories to increase in size as well as number.

The jobs provided by the railroad and the City's many other thriving industries were a powerful attraction to new immigrants seeking work. Reading's original population was largely of German heritage. Now, immigrants from Ireland, Poland, Italy and the Ukraine settled in the southern part of the City, right among the factories where they worked. As the immigrants and laborers settled in the southern part of the City, the introduction of the trolley in 1874 allowed Reading's wealthy industrialists to move north, building their Victorian-era mansions along Centre Avenue and establishing that neighborhood as one of Reading's first suburbs.

The boundaries of the city grew north and south, and by the late 1860's, the City limits included what is now the heart of the City. The Riverdale, Northmont, and Glenside neighborhoods were added in the early 1900's along with the 18th Ward and an area of Mt. Penn. The City achieved its current configuration in the late 1960's.

At the dawn of the 20th Century, Reading was a major manufacturing center. As the City's population grew, technological advancement led to modern industry and the manufacturing of machinery and automobiles. Retail activity became important, and the City had several large department stores. In 1923, there were 700 manufacturing institutions producing more than 300 different types of goods. Reading boasted the largest brick kiln in the country and was an important center for both hosiery manufacture and the production of builder's hardware.

The economic depression of the late 1930's affected the City just as it did the entire nation. However, the railroad and its related industries fared better than most because the rails were still used to move basic commodities. The Depression still marked the beginning of the City's seven-decade decline in prominence as a population and manufacturing center. The 1930 Census reported that the City was home to 111,171 people, or 48% of all Berks County residents, a peak that has never been equaled since.

With its concentration of heavy industry, Reading was an important center during World War II. Despite the high demand for labor both during and after the war, the population continued to drop. When the war was over, the boom in housing and highway construction enabled many families to leave the City for the new suburbs.

The 1940's, 1950's, and early 1960's were a particularly colorful era for the City of Reading as it gained a reputation as a haven for illegal gambling activity and attendant political corruption. The City achieved such notoriety that it became the focus of a 1966 investigation by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice. In 1967, the Commission produced a document entitled, Wincanton: The Politics of Corruption, with "Wincanton" being a thinly disguised Reading. However, by the time the report was finally issued, most of the principal players (easily recognizable to City residents despite the fictional names given by the authors) were either in jail or dead, and one of Reading's more shameful chapters had been closed.

The 1960's and 1970's were marked by the effect of Federal urban renewal programs upon the City. Although it later became fashionable to criticize the effects of the wholesale demolition and reconstruction that these programs sponsored, there is little doubt that Reading gained some clear benefits. Large areas of old, dilapidated and dense development in the downtown area were cleared and replaced with new structures or surface parking. The redevelopment effort was further "assisted" in June 1972 by Hurricane Agnes, which brought the most serious flooding the City had ever experienced. The low-lying areas along Riverfront Drive were destroyed, clearing the way for the Reading Area Community College campus and the industrial development that now occupies these lands.

The widespread demolition funded by Federal urban renewal programs may have contributed to a "backlash" in provoking a nationwide resurgence of interest in urban areas and their history. Reading felt some of this interest, and in 1978, the City received a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) to conduct a historical sites survey of the entire City. It was recognized that the preservation of Reading's historic resources was vital in maintaining Reading's large inventory of early 20th Century structures and that significant elements of the City's historical integrity were being lost through the effects of demolition and "misguided" (i.e., historically inappropriate) improvements. The survey identified no fewer than 23 potential historical districts within the City. In the late 1970's and early 1980's, three historic districts were established in Reading: Callowhill, Centre Park and Prince. To protect the districts' historic resources, a Historic District Ordinance was adopted and a Historical Architecture Review Board (HARB) was established.

In 1991, the City of Reading Charter Study Commission was elected to study the existing commission form of government, and to determine whether becoming a Home Rule Charter City would be more economical or efficient. The Commission's study concluded that the City would benefit with a "strong mayor" form of home-rule government. The City electorate endorsed this recommendation and a new City Charter was drafted. The new Charter took effect in January 1996.

In 1998, Reading celebrated its 250th Anniversary, based on the year that Thomas and Richard Penn first laid out the City. The year-long bicenquinquagenary celebration included a combined 250th Anniversary-Armed Forces Day Parade, various projects by individual schools, celebration by various ethnic groups, a commemorative train trip to Philadelphia, and the burying of a time capsule to be opened in 2048.

READING WITHIN THE REGION

The City of Reading is strategically and geographically located within the center of Berks County. The City is comprised of a total land area of 9.99 square miles (6,394 acres) and is bounded to the north by Bern Township and Muhlenberg Township; to the east by Lower Alsace Township, Mt. Penn Borough

and Cumru Township; to the south by Cumru Township and Kenhorst Borough; and to the west by Wyomissing Borough and West Reading Borough. The City of Reading is regionally depicted within Berks County on Figure 1 of this Plan.

While the City of Reading is located within the heart of Berks County, it is also regionally located within close proximity to various diverse urbanized areas such as the City of Philadelphia (47 miles to the southeast), the City of Allentown (31 miles to the northeast), the City of Lancaster (29 miles to the southwest), the City of Harrisburg (52 miles to the west), the City of Lebanon (28 miles to the northwest), the City of Pottsville (28 miles to the north) and the City of Scranton (67 miles to the northeast). Figure 1 depicts the regional location of the City of Reading within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Based upon the regionalized location of the City of Reading, it is directly influenced by the land use characteristics and development patterns of all adjacent urbanized urban areas. The City of Reading has also been indirectly effected by the undeveloped rural and suburban areas located within close proximity to the City of Reading. The current trends of residential, commercial and industrial land development activity, encroaching upon the rural undeveloped areas of Berks County, has resulted in a significant social and economic impact on the City of Reading.

EXISTING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The existing land use and development patterns within any municipality are essential planning elements to formulate a plan for park, recreation and open space to accommodate the needs of the residents within the City of Reading. An Existing Land Use Map was prepared by the City of Reading in 1998, as part of the overall preparation of the City of Reading Comprehensive Plan 2000. In order to supplement the previous planning effort, an update to the Existing Land Use Map was conducted for the City of Reading and adjacent municipalities in July of 2001, utilizing real estate assessment records for use in developing this Plan. Although certain land use designations varied slightly, it could be concluded that the land use patterns were fairly consistent with the Comprehensive Plan 2000.

Based upon the 1998 land Use Survey conducted by the City of Reading as part of the Comprehensive Plan (2000), it was concluded that the City of Reading contained the following land use composition:

27.6 % Residential

9.3 % Commercial

8.3 % Industrial

9.0 % Public and Quasi-Public

13.1 % Outdoor Recreational

2.5 % Cemetery

20.1 % Transportation

4.3 % Railroad

2.2 % Schuylkill River and Tulpehocken Creek

3.6 % Undeveloped

The Existing Land Use Map of 2001 for the City of Reading and adjacent municipalities is depicted on Figure 2 of this Plan.

DEMOGRAPHIC INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Population characteristics generally provide guidance in determining the resources and needs of a community. The following information concerning population, sex and age characteristics, race and housing will be utilized to compare and analyze demographic data as it relates to the recreation and open space needs of the City of Reading.

Tables 1 and 2 provide historical population counts and trends for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Berks County and the City of Reading.

TABLE 1 HISTORICAL POPULATION COUNTS (1960 - 2000)					
YEAR	PENNSYLVANIA	BERKS COUNTY	CITY OF READING		
1960	11,319,366	275,414	98,177		
1970	11,800,766	296,382	87,643		
1980	11,863,895	312,497	78,686		
1990	11,881,643	336,523	78,380		
2000	12,281,054	373,638	81,207		

TABLE 2 HISTORICAL POPULATION TRENDS (1960 - 2000)					
DECADE	PENNSYLVANIA	BERKS COUNTY	CITY OF READING		
1960 - 1970	4.24 %	7.61 %	- 10.73 %		
1970 - 1980	0.53 %	5.44 %	- 10.22 %		
1980 - 1990	0.15 %	7.69 %	- 0.39 %		
1990 - 2000	3.36 %	11.03 %	3.61 %		

Based upon a review of the historical population trends, the following conclusions and assumptions have been derived for the City of Reading:

- The City of Reading has experienced some significant losses in population between 1960 and 1990. This trend could be attributed to suburban sprawl, a decline in quality housing, a high crime rate, the 1972 flood (Tropical Storm Agnes) and potential undercounts by the United States Census Bureau.
- Over the past decade the City of Reading has experience a moderate gain in the overall
 population. This gain could be attributed to an increase subdivision and land development
 activity, promotional effort to improve the quality of life, and improved efforts by the United
 States Census Bureau.

Table 3 provides a demographic profile of selected data (sex, age, race and density composition) for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Berks County and the City of Reading for the year 2000.

TABLE 3 PROFILE OF GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (2000)									
DEMOGRAPHIC	PENNSYLVANIA		BERKS CO	UNTY	CITY OF READING				
PROFILE	TOTAL NUMBER	PERCENT	TOTAL NUMBER	PERCENT	TOTAL NUMBER	PERCENT			
SEX		•				<u></u>			
Male	5,929,663	48.3	182,956	49.0	39,205	48.3			
Female	6,351,391 51.7 190,682 51.0		51.0	42,002	51.7				
AGE									
Under 5 years	727,804	5.9	23,032	6,2	7,037	8.7			
5 – 14 years	1,691,794	12.6	53,448	14.3	13,776	17.6			
15 – 24 years	1,597,072	13.0	48,466	13.0	12,987	16.0			
25 – 34 years	1,560,486	12.7	47,454	12.7	12,244	15.1			
35 – 44 years	1,948,076	15.9	60,489	16.2	11,261	13.9			
45 – 54 years	1,705,032	13.9	51,305	13,7	8,339	10.3			
55 – 64 years	1,131,625	9.2	33,354	8.9	5,495	6.8			
65 – 74 years	969,272	7.9	28,766	7.7	4,940	6.1			
75 – 84 years	712,326	5.8	20,164	5.4	3,759	4.6			
85 years and over	237,567	1.9	7,260	1.9	1,369	1.7			
MEDIAN AGE		38.0	37.4		30.6				
RACE									
One Race	12,138,830	98.8	368,028	98.5	77,815	95.8			
2 or more Races	1,224,612	1.2	5,610	1.5	3,392	4.2			
White	10,484,203	85.4	329,460	88,2	48,059	59.2			
Black/AfrAmer.	1,224,612	10.0	13,778	3.7	9,947	12.2			
American Indian	18,348	0.1	611	0.2	356	0,4			
Asian	219,813	1.8	3,785	1.0	1,296	1,6			
Hawaiian/Pac.Isl.	3,417	74	77		32				
Some other race	188,437	1.5	20,317	5.4	18,125	22.3			
Hispanic/Latino	394,088	3.2	36,357	9.7	30,302	37.3			
DENSITY	274.01 Persons/Sq	uare Mile	432.3 Persons/S	Square Mile	8,202.7 Persons/Sq				
Source: United Sta	tes Census Bureau								

Based upon a review of the selected statistical data contained in Table 3, the following conclusions and assumptions have been derived concerning the demographics of the City of Reading:

• The City of Reading has a significantly younger population (34 years and younger) as compared to those of the Berks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This statistic is further evident when comparing all adult age groups (35 years and over) and in the median age for the City of Reading. This Plan must address the needs of the younger age groups.

- The race composition is more diverse within the City of Reading as compared to the percentages
 within Berks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This composition is generally a
 characteristic of urban environments within the United States. Of specific note, 37.3 percent of
 the population within the City of Reading is considered Hispanic or Latino in origin.
- The residential density composition was significantly higher within the City of Reading, as compared to Berks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This count is consistent with most cities and urban areas within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Based upon the demographic profile presented for sex, age, race and density composition, this Plan will attempt to address the recreational and open space needs within the City of Reading. Specific attention should be provided to the younger age groups (under 34 years), the ethnicity and minority composition, and the overall residential density within the City of Reading.

HOUSING INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Table 4 provides a housing profile of selected data (total housing units, occupancy and ownership rates) for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Berks County and the City of Reading for the year 2000.

	PROFILE O		TABLE 4 NG CHARACTE	ERISTICS ((2000)	
HOUSING	PENNSYLV	ANIA	BERKS CC	UNTY	CITY OF READING	
PROFILE	TOTAL NUMBER	PERCENT	TOTAL NUMBER	PERCENT	TOTAL NUMBER	PERCENT
Total Number of Housing Units	5,249,750	100.0	150,222	100.0	34,314	100.0
Occupied Units	4,777,003	91.0	141,570	94.2	30,113	87.8
Vacant Units	472,724	9.0	8,652	5.8	4,201	12.2
Owner Occupied	3,406,337	71.3	104,719	74.0	15,355	51.0
Renter Occupied	1,370,666	28.7	36,851	26.0	14,758	49.0
Persons/Owner Occupied Unit	2.62 Average Persons/Unit		2.65 Average Persons/Unit		2.74 Average Pe	rsons/Unit
Persons/Renter Occupied Unit	2.12 Average Persons/Unit		2.27 Average Persons/Unit		2.51 Average Persons/Unit	
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	1.6 %		1.7 %		4.9 %	
Rental Unit Vacancy Rate		7.2 %	6.3 %		9.1 %	

Based upon a review of the selected statistical data contained in Table 4, the following conclusions and assumptions have derived concerning the housing profile for the City of Reading:

• The percentage of vacant housing units is significantly higher within the City of Reading, as compared to Berks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This count is consistent with most cities and urban areas within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

- The owner to rental housing occupancy ratio is almost 1 to 1 ratio within the City of Reading as compared to a nearly 3 to 1 ratio for Berks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- The average number of persons per household is significantly higher within the City of Reading, as compared to Berks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- The vacancy rates for homeowner and rental occupied housing units within the City of Reading is significantly higher within the City of Reading, as compared to Berks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Of specific note is the high vacancy rate for homeowners within the City of Reading.

Based upon the housing profile presented, this Plan will attempt to address the recreational and open space needs within the City of Reading. Specific attention should be paid to the ownership and rental composition, overall occupancy rates, and the average person per residential unit.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Table 5 provides a social and economic profile (income, poverty status and education) for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Berks County and the City of Reading for the year 1990.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE	PENNSYLVANIA		BERKS COUNTY		CITY OF READING	
Per Capita Income	\$ 14,068		\$ 14,604		\$ 11,041	
Median Family Income	\$ 34,856		\$ 37,755		\$ 27,277	
Median Household Income	\$ 29,069		\$ 32,048		\$ 22,112	
Persons Below Poverty Status and Conditions	1,283,629 10.8 %		26,220	7.8 %	14,857	19.0 %
Families Below Poverty Status and Conditions	259,117	8.1 %	4,806	5.2 %	2,947	15.2 %
High School Graduation	8,875,587	74.7 %	235,566	70.0 %	45,774	58.4 %
College Graduation	2,126,814	17.9 %	50,815	15.1 %	6,662	8.5 %

Based upon a review of the selected statistical data contained in Table 5, the following conclusions and assumptions have been derived concerning the social and economic profile for the City of Reading:

 The per capita income, median family income and median family income levels for the City of Reading are significantly lower compared to the averages of Berks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This statistic is consistent with most cities and urban areas within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

- The overall poverty status (persons and families) is significantly higher for the City of Reading, compared to the averages of Berks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This statistic is also consistent with most cities and urban areas within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- The educational attainment levels (high school and college graduation rates) are significantly lower for the City of Reading, as compared to the averages of Berks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This statistic is also consistent with most cities and urban areas within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Based upon the social and economic profile presented, this Plan will attempt to address the recreational and open space needs within the City of Reading. Specific attention should be paid to income levels, poverty status rates, and educational attainment levels.

THE GOVERNMENTAL COMPOSITION OF THE CITY OF READING

The City of Reading has an elected Mayor who supervises the day-to-day operations of City government. Seven (7) residents within the City of Reading are elected to City Council, with one (1) resident serving as president and the other (6) represent geographic districts. The primary responsibilities of City Council include enacting legislation, developing budget priorities, monitoring spending, and overseeing the administrative management performance of City government.

The City of Reading operates through a system of departments: Community Development, Finance, Fire and Rescue Services, Human Resources, Police, Law, and Public Works. The directors of each department report to the City Managing Director, who answers to the Mayor.

PARKS AND RECREATION WITH THE CITY OF READING'S GOVERNEMENT

Parks and recreation services in Reading fall under the Department of Public Works. As seen on the City's organizational chart, three division managers report to the Director of Public Works: Environmental, Services, and Operations. Parks and recreation services are housed in the Operations Division. The Operations Division Manager oversees four teams of service, Streets, Property Maintenance, Parks, and Recreation, each of which are headed by a superintendent or supervisor.

Table 6 of this Plan provides an Organizational Chart for the City of Reading Department of Public Works.

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TABLE 6

Mayor
Eppihimer,
Joseph D.

-	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , 					TO ATTEND
			nager	Michael Zuber Recreation Team Superintendent	Foremen	
	City Council		Kyle Zeiber Operations Division Manager	Kyle Zeiber Parks and Property Maintenance Team Superintendent	Foremen	Workforce
	Cit	Works	Ope	Gene Tezak Streets Team Superintendent	Foremen	
ihimer, Mayor		Director of Public	sion Manager ant)	George Fultz Garage Superintendent	Foreman	Orce
Joseph D. Eppihimer, Mayor	Jeffrey White, Managing Director Charles M. Jones, P.E., Director of Public Works	s M. Jones, P.E., Di	Services Division Manager (Vacant)	John Giardiello Traffic Engineer	Engineers Traffic Control	Workforce
		Charle	Charles N Deborah A.S. Hoag, P.E. Environmental Division Manager	Richard Maurer Sanitary Sewer Supervisor	Foreman	Workforce
				Jane Meeks Solid Waste Coordinator	Contractors	Workforce
		Deborah		Kevin Edwards W.W.T.P. Superintendent	Lab Supervisor Bio Solid Supervisor Maintenance Superv. Electrical Engineer	Workforce

SECTION 3: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In order to solicit input from citizens and special interest groups within the City of Reading, a Student Recreation Survey and a Resident Recreation Survey were conducted as part of this planning effort. In addition to the surveys, four (4) community meetings were held to gather background information and to document the recreational needs of the City of Reading.

STUDENT RECREATION SURVEY

A total of 7,100 surveys were distributed to all students within the Reading School District. These students are part of the Reading High School (3,550 students), Northeast Middle School (1,150 students), Northwest Middle School (950 students), Southern Middle School (800 students) and Southwest Middle School (650 students). A total of 5,270 students within the City of Reading completed the survey between June 1, 2001 and June 15, 2001. This represents a 74.4 percent response rate. A copy of the Student Recreation Survey is contained within Appendix A of this Plan. The following is a summary of the results, as they appeared on the Student Recreation Survey.

1. Male or Female:

```
52.9 % were Female
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47.1 % were Male.

2. Age Distribution:

```
38.7 % were between the ages of 11 - 13;
```

3. The parks, playground and recreation facilities within the City of Reading utilized the most (by percentage of the overall total):

```
12.7 % City Park
```

12.5 % Other park, playground or recreation facility

11.0 % No Response

^{30.8 %} were between the ages of 14 - 15;

^{30.5} % were between the ages of 16 - 18.

^{10.2 %} Schlegel Park

^{9.9 %} Baer Park

^{8.1 %} Pendora Park

^{8.0 % 11}th and Pike Playground

^{7.7 % 3&}lt;sup>rd</sup> and Spruce Recreation Center

^{6.1 %} Angelica Park

^{4.9 %} Barbey's Playground

^{4.7 %} Brookline Playground

^{4.2 %} Hillside Playground

- 4. Swimming pool use over the summer.
 - 25.8 % go swimming several times per week
 - 42.4 % go swimming several times per month
 - 31.7 % never go swimming

Top reasons for not going swimming: lack of swimming pools/facilities; too crowded; and don't like to swim

- 5. Top activities that the students like to do:
 - 7.4 % Basketball
 - 5.1 % Baseball
 - 4.2 % Hanging out with friends
 - 3.9 % Swimming
 - 3.7 % Skateboarding
 - 3.5 % Dances
 - 3.4 % Softball
 - 2.9 % Rollerblading
 - 2.8 % Soccer
 - 2.8 % Weight Training
 - 2.5 % Concerts
 - 2.5 % BMX Biking
 - 2.3 % Fitness/Aerobics
 - 2.2 % Street Hockey
 - 2.0 % Playground Play
 - 2.0 % Computer Classes
 - 1.8 % Roller Skating
 - 1.7 % Mountain Biking
 - 1.7% Weight Training
 - 1.7 % Canoeing/Rafting
 - 1.6 % Golf Lessons
 - 1.5 % Track and Field
 - 1.5 % Craft Lessons
 - 1.5 % Boxing
 - 1.4 % Self Defense/Karate Class
 - 1.4 % Volleyball
 - 1.4% Hiking
 - 1.4 % Ice Skating
 - 1.4 % Music Lessons

- 1.2 % Fishing
- 1.2 % Bowling
- 1.2 % Rock Climbing
- 1.2 % Billiards
- 1.1 % Tennis Lessons
- 1.1 % Walking/Running
- 1.0 % Drama/Acting Classes
- 0.9 % Flag Football
- 0.9 % Art Classes
- 0.7 % In-Line Hockey
- 0.7 % Summer Day Camps
- 0.7 % Self Improvement Classes
- 0.7 % Fooseball/Air Hockey
- 0.7 % Ice Hockey
- 0.7 % Lifeguard Training
- 0.6 % Babysitter's Training
- 0.5 % Frisbee/Frisbee Golf
- 0.5 % Ping Pong
- 0.3 % Outdoor Rec/Nature Class
- 0.2 % Driver's Education
- 0.2 % Lacrosse
- 0.1 % Dance Lessons
- 0.1 % Gardening/Landscaping
- 0.1 % Volunteer Services
- 0.1% Rugby
- 0.9 % Other
- 9.3 % No Response
- 6. Student awareness if recreation programs offered by the City of Reading:
 - 26.1 % Know about them
 - 38.6 % Know something about them
 - 35.3 % Don't know about them

- 7. Top 10 recreation programs the students participate in:
 - 1. 3rd and Spruce
 - 2. Olivets Boys and Girls Club
 - 3. PAL
 - 4. 11th and Pike
 - 5. Baer Park
 - 6. YMCA
 - 7. Schlegel Park
 - 8. Blacktop League
 - 9. City Park
 - 10. 10th and Green
- 8. More recreation programs are needed for the students:

80.7 % Yes

19.3 % No

- 9. Top reasons for not participating in recreation programs:
 - 1. no transportation
 - 2. don't know about the them
 - 3. facilities are in poor condition
 - 4. not well organized
 - 5. just not interested
 - 6. don't have the time
 - 7. can't afford the fee
 - 8. what I like is not offered
- 10. Would you join a sports program where everyone makes a team?

77.1 % Yes

22.9 % No

11. Recreation facilities needed in the City of Reading:

14.1 %	Basketball
9.3 %	Fitness Center
9.1%	Outdoor Swimming
9.0 %	Skate Board Park
8.4 %	Teen Dance Club
72%	Indoor Soccer/Hockey

6.3 % Roller Blade Trails

5.7 % Batting Cages

5.5 % BMX Bike Course

4.2 % Indoor Swimming Pools1.5 % Sand Volleyball Courts

5.3 % Gymnasium

5.1 % Teen Center/Coffeehouse

1.2 % Other

8.1 % No Response

12. Should the reading School District use parks as outdoor classrooms for history, biology and other subjects?

63.7 % Yes 36.3 % No

RESIDENT RECREATION SURVEY

A total of 2,000 recreation surveys were distributed throughout the City of Reading and to over 70 special interest groups and organizations. A total of 322 residents within the City of Reading completed the survey between June 1, 2001 and July 27, 2001. A copy of the Resident Recreation Survey is contained within Appendix B of this Plan. The following is a summary of the results, as they appeared on the Student Recreation Survey.

- 1. The 5 community parks utilized most frequently include:
 - 1. City Park
 - 2. Schlegel Park
 - 3. Pendora Park
 - 4. Baer Park
 - 5. Angelica Park

The condition of these parks have been described as follows:

37.6 % Good

42.6 % Satisfactory

19.8 % Poor

The frequency of family use is described as follows:

12.9 % Once per week

33.1 % Once or more per month

31.2 % Several times a year

18.2 % Once per year

4.6 % Never

- 2. The 5 neighborhood parks utilized most frequently include:
 - 1. 11th and Pike Playground
 - 2. 3rd and Spruce Recreation Complex
 - 3. Brookline Playground
 - 4. Barbey's Playground
 - 5. Windsor and Ritter Playground

The condition of these parks have been described as follows:

32.7 % Good

45.2 % Satisfactory

22.1 % Poor

The frequency of family use is described as follows:

14.1 % Once per week

27.8 % Once or more per month

33.5 % Several times a year

20.4 % Once per year

4,2 % Never

3. The 5 mini-parks utilized most frequently include:

- 1. Northmont Playground
- 2. Hillside Playground
- 3. Keffer park Playground
- 4. Neversink Playground
- 5. Sixth and Amity Playground

The condition of these parks have been described as follows:

30.1% Good

39.7 % Satisfactory

30.2 % Poor

The frequency of family use is described as follows:

15.7 % Once per week

26.5 % Once or more per month

34.5 % Several times a year

19.8 % Once per year

3.5 % Never

4. The overall condition of the parks and recreation facilities were rated as follows:

22.7 % Good

38.5 % Satisfactory

33.2 % Poor

5.6 % No opinion

5. Top activities that the adults like to do:

3.7	%	Concerts
5.1	0/0	Walking/Iogg

5.1 % Walking/Jogging

4.9 % Open Gyms

4.7 % Aerobics/Fitness

4.5 % Biking

4.2 % One day Workshops

4.2 % Self Improvement Classes

3.7 % Golf Lessons

3.5 % Community Sports Contests

3.0 % Softball Leagues (35+/50+)

2.7% Hiking

2.6 % Bus Trips

2.5 % Basketball Leagues (35+/50+)

2.5 % Roller Blading

2.4 % Swimming Lessons

2.2 % Karate/Self Defense

1.9 % Fishing

1.8 % Picnicking

1.7 % Music Lessons

1.7 % Social/Special Events

1.7 % Computer Classes

1.6 % Drama/Acting Classes

1.5 % Programs taken with Children

1.5 % Golf Leagues

1.5 % Volunteer/Community Service

1.4 % Volleyball League (35+/50+)

1.4 % Softball League

1.4 % Outdoor Recreation/Nature Classes

1.2 % Youth Sport Coaching

1.2 % Flag Football

1.0 % Boxing

1.0 % Soccer League

1.0 % Boating/Sailing

0.9 % Basketball League

0.9 % Ice Skating

0.9 % Mountain Biking

0.8 % Programs w/ Grandchildren

0.7 % Volleyball League

0.7 % Dance Lessons

0.6 % Arts and Crafts

0.5 % Gardening/Landscaping

0.5 % Weight Training

0.5 % Tennis Leagues

0.4 % Street Hockey

0.4 % Health and Safety

0.3 % Skateboarding

0.2 % Coed Sports

0.2 % Soccer League (35+/50+)

0.1 % Ice Hockey

0.1 % Cross Country Skiing

0.1 % Tennis Lessons

0.2 % Other

8.1 % No Response

6. Resident awareness if recreation programs offered by the City of Reading:

25.8 % Aware about them

37.5 % Somewhat aware about them

36.7 % Not aware know about them

7. Resident support of creating new trails:

87.4 % Yes

12.6 % No

How would you support creating new trails:

1. Use the trail

2. Help with fund raising

3. Join a "Friends of the Trail" group

4. Provide maintenance

5. Provide funds for acquisition

6. Serve on governing body

- Age groups that need more recreation programs, facilities and/or services: 8.
 - 1. Adults (19 59 years)
 - 2. High School (15 18 years)
 - 3. Middle School (12 14 years)
 - 4. Adults (60 years and up)
 - 5. Elementary School (6 11 years)
 - 6. Pre-School (2 5 years)
- Are you willing to see an increase in funds to expand and improve park areas, trails, recreation 9. centers and programs?

51.7% Yes

48.3 % No

10. Are there enough parks in the City of Reading in the right places?

67.4 % Yes

32.6 % No

11. Recreation facilities needed in the City of Reading:

Indoor Facilities:

- 1. Indoor Fitness/Recreation Center
- 2. Adult Social Center
- 3. Indoor Swimming Pool

- Outdoor Facilities: 1. Hiking/Biking Trails
 - 2. Open Space/Passive Recreation Areas
 - 3. Cultural Center
- Should the City of Reading and Reading School District cooperate to allow use of the school facilities whenever possible for community recreation programs?

93.5 % Yes

6.5 % No

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Four (4) community meetings were held to gather background information and to document the recreational needs of the City of Reading. These community meetings were open to the general public and were held at the following venues and dates:

Milmont Elementary School on Thursday, June 14, 2001 Northeast Middle School on Tuesday, June 19, 2001 Southern Middle School on Wednesday, June 20, 2001 Northwest Middle School on Thursday, June 21, 2001

Although the attendance at the community meetings was low, some valuable information was exchanged through an open dialogue session between the residents, staff member and consultants. The following topics were discussed:

- 1. The area along the Schuylkill River should be utilized for passive recreation areas, such as walking and biking trails.
- 2. The greenways along the Schuylkill River should be partially cleared of the overgrown vegetation in order to enhance its scenic value.
- 3. The existing greenways along the Schuylkill River should be linked together.
- 4. The City of Reading should apply for grants to fund the improvements of existing recreation areas and the purchase of open space.
- 5. The recreation facilities owned and operated by the Reading School District should be open to the residents within the City of Reading.
- 6. The baseball field at Schlegel Park needs lights for night games, a concession stand, batting cage and bleachers.
- The swimming pool at Schlegel Park needs improvements.
- 8. Facilities are needed to accommodate specific activities such as skateboarding, roller blading and street hockey.
- 9. Public restroom facilities should be provided at all parks to improve sanitary conditions.
- 10. The staff to maintain the existing facilities should be increased to effectively manage and beautify the park and recreation facilities within the City of Reading.
- 11. Security at the existing recreation facilities has been improving, however, increased security personnel are needed.
- 12. The City of Reading has many cultural and historical resources that should be considered as part of any future improvements.
- 13. City Park should be considered a focus point for existing and passive recreation activities.
- 14. City Park needs more tennis courts and provisions for street hockey.
- 15. Organized youth and adult leagues are needed for the residents within the City of Reading.
- 16. Communication needs to be enhanced in order to inform the residents within the City of Reading of the types of programs and activities that are available to the public.

- 17. Evening indoor events should be coordinated to provide recreation opportunities to residents who can not utilize the facilities during the day.
- 18. The 10th and South Playground has stormwater and erosion problems that need to corrected.
- 19. The 10th and South Playground has vehicular access problems.
- 20. Pendora Park needs improvements to the picnic areas, pavilions, water fountains and bathroom facilities.
- 21. The existing park and recreation areas within the City of Reading should be maintained as part of a community service requirement.
- 22. Environmental education is needed so the existing open space and recreation areas are appreciated by the residents within the City of Reading.
- 23. Consideration should be provided to naming or re-naming parks and recreation areas after famous athletes from the City of Reading.
- 24. Transportation enhancements and grant opportunities should be explored to finance access and transportation improvements in order to provide linkages between recreation areas.
- 25. The portion of River Road that traverses the Carpenter Technology site should be utilized as a bicycle and walk trail.
- 26. The area around the perimeter of Baer Park needs to be maintained.
- 27. Volunteerism should be coordinated on an individual, neighborhood and group effort.
- 28. Indoor recreation centers are needed to provide young people with active recreation opportunities and provide alternatives in order to reduce crime.
- 29. The 6th and Amity Playground needs improvements and renovations.
- 30. The E.J. Dives Playground needs improvements and renovations.
- 31. The City of Reading should consider employing a full time person to research and complete grant applications that could assist in the implementation of this Plan.
- Community development funding should be utilized for the playgrounds that have not been renovated.

SECTION 4: INVENTORY, ANALYSIS AND ISSUES

To get a complete picture of existing conditions, five aspects of the system now in place to deliver recreation and park services within the City of Reading are inventoried and analyzed:

- Staffing and Financing
- Park Areas and Recreation Facilities
- Recreation Programs
- Maintenance, Safety, and Security
- Communications and Public Involvement

STAFFING AND FINANCING

City of Reading Parks and Recreation Teams

A full-time Recreation Superintendent answers to the Public Works Operations Division Manager and oversees the Recreation Team, which provides public recreation programs throughout the City of Reading and maintains some facilities. The administrative offices are located in the 3rd and Spruce Street Recreation Center. The Recreation Team employs seven full-time people: one superintendent, three program supervisors (an athletic supervisor, a center manager/planner, and the RAFT program coordinator, who is funded by the Community Development Block Grant program), two maintenance workers, and one secretary. A permanent part-time employee is responsible for grant writing for the Team. Over 100 additional part-time staff works for the Team.

The Parks and Property Maintenance Team are responsible for the development, maintenance, and repair of park areas and recreational facilities within the City of Reading. The Teams headquarters are at the Park Maintenance Building at 14th and Walnut Streets. A full-time Parks and Property Maintenance Superintendent oversees the Team and reports to the Director of Public Works. Recently, the Parks Superintendent and Property maintenance duties were combined. The Parks and Property Maintenance Superintendent also serves as the City Horticulturist and also is responsible for cleaning, maintaining, and repairing all public buildings. The Property Maintenance Team currently has 10 full-time workers (carpenters, electricians, locksmiths, plumbers).

The Parks Team employs 22 full-time people: one parks supervisor, two foremen (a recreation equipment foreman who is responsible for repair and maintenance of park facilities, and a maintenance foreman, who oversees work such as grass mowing, tree trimming, and snow removal), five equipment operators, 11 maintenance workers (two of which answer directly to a foreman and function like crew leaders, and two of which are actually custodians), two custodians, and one secretary (shared with the Property Maintenance and Streets Team), plus one small equipment repairman who primarily works on Parks equipment. One Parks worker is stationed at each of these park sites: Angelica, Baer, Egelman's, Pendora, and Schlegel Parks. The full-time Parks workers are members of the AFSCME union. Four to five part-time maintenance workers are added to the work crew each summer. Occasionally, people who are required to do community service as a condition of court sentencing assist with park maintenance.

Tables 6 and 7 of this Plan provide organizational charts for the Operations Division and Recreation Team of the Department of Public Works.

Summer Playground Instructors Recreation Aides (part time)

Seasonal Workers (part time)

Grant Writer (part time)

Seasonal Workers (part time)

3 Supervisors 1 Secretary 2 Custodians

	OPERATIONS DIVISION OR	OPERATIONS DIVISION ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (2002)	\sim 1
	Kyle Operations D	Kyle Zeiber Operations Division Manager	
	Vicky Operations Di	Vicky Hoffman Operations Division Secretary	
Streets Team	Parks and Property	Parks and Property Maintenance Team	
Gene Tezak Streets Superintendent	Kyle Z Parks and Property Mai	Kyle Zeiber Parks and Property Maintenance Superintendent	
remen uipment Operators 2's uipment Operators 1's	3 Foremen 6 Tradesman 3 Maintenance Workers 3's	2 Foremen 3 Equipment Operators 3's 1 Equipment Repairman	% 7 7 3 8 7 3 8 8 7 3 8 9 8 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9
		2 Maintenance Workers 3's 4 Maintenance Workers 2's 5 Maintenance Workers 1's 2 Custodians	58 % %
' OF READING 10-YEAR PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN	4TION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN	PAGE 24	

16 Equipment 7 Equipment

3 Foremen

Recreation Superintendent

Michael Zuber

Recreation Team

CITY OF READING DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

TABLE 7

TABLE 8 CITY OF READING DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS RECREATION TEAM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (2002)

3rd and Spruce Recreation Center Playgrounds 11th and Pike Recreation Center Recreation Superintendent Neighborhood Centers Community Centers Michael Zuber

	F.	Athletics	Programs	Secretarial	Maintenance
H H	owski rvisor	Matthew Lubas Athletic Supervisor	Heather Boyer Program Supervisor	Joella Simmons-Ellis Secretary	Chester Gaylor Josh Smeltzer Maintenance Supervisors
11 th &)enter	Schlegel Park Pool	3 rd & Spruce Rec. Center	Bookkeeping	Building and Ground
Glensic	ıter	Adult Athletic Leagues	Nature Center	Facility Rentals	Maintenance of:
CDBG	ninist.	Summer Tennis	City Wide Programs	Equipment Rentals	Keffer Park
10th &	Center	City Field Schedules	and Publicity		11 th and Pike Playground
Summe	. Programs		Millmont Rec. Center		3 rd & Spruce Rec. Center
Semi-A	ty Insp.				

CITY











































































































